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ABSTRACT

The Child Development-Head Start program of Hartford is described. Included is a statement of needs, program objectives, a description of the components (sites), and the evaluation plan. This Head Start program has special provisions for Spanish bilingual as well as handicapped children. Parent involvement is stressed. Results of the evaluation indicated gains in language development for the children in the program lasting through the end of kindergarten. Information gained from the parent questionnaire indicated that most parents had visited their child's school and/or worked with the teacher. (ST)

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CHILD DEVELOPMENT - HEADSTART PROGRAM

Background

In many respects, the Child Development HeadStart Program is really Hartford's own. Predating the inauguration of formal open education in Hartford, and begun with local funding, the program has been developed and expanded through a series of other financial sources; monies from OEO, ESEA, and SADC in turn, contributed to overall program development. In this way the 1972-73 school year saw some 420 preschool youngsters who had been selected on the basis of OEO poverty guidelines, residence in Title I target areas, and social, emotional, health and educational needs which would fit within the framework of the program, provided with a comprehensive program which would serve them well as a vital thrust to kindergarten entry.

Statement of Needs

The specific needs which were addressed by this component included the following:

1. Improving the child's mental processes and skills with particular attention to conceptual and verbal skills.
2. Helping the emotional and social development of the child by encouraging self-confidence, spontaneity, curiosity and self descipline.
3. Establishing patterns and expectations of success for the child which will create a climate of confidence for his future learning efforts.

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4. Improving the child's physical health and physical abilities.

Objectives

Based on outside research, and supplemented by later experimentation both within and outside the Hartford situation, a series of specific behavioral and program objectives were developed. The behavioral objectives stemmed from the Follow Through methodology which, although carrying the name of the national program, was uniquely Hartford's own; an individualized program which recognized the needs of urban youngsters and conducted in a free and open environment. Specific program objectives included the following:

1. To provide a comprehensive child development program for each child including handicapped children which will develop in each child and his family a feeling of self-worth.
2. To provide a preshcool experience in which children feel wanted, accepted and recognized because of their unique individualities.
3. To provide a program which will motivate children to learn and experience joy and self-confidence through learning.
4. To provide a program of learning based on the individual needs of each child's developmental rate of growth and learning.
5. To create a learning environment which will help each child's emotional and social development by encouraging self-expression, self-discipline and curiosity.
6. To improve and expand each child's ability to think, reason and speak clearly in order to equip him with the basic necessary tools and

skills needed to promote learning which will enable him to experience success in life daily.

7. To encourage and develop good health habits and attitudes which will result in improved health for each child and his family.

8. To increase the health and social services available to each child and his family and to help the community become more responsive to these needs with improved delivery of services within the neighborhood.

9. To work constructively with the child and his family to develop a cohesive family group in which the child feels secure and is able to get along with others in the family.

10. To help children and their families to get wider and more varied meaningful experiences which will broaden their horizons, increase their ease of conversation and improve their understanding of the community and world in which they live and be able to participate successfully in it.

11. To involve parents in the education of their children. Not only as observers or volunteers but as decisions makers.

12. To affect changes constructively where needed whether it is in the school, the home, or the community at large.

13. To train parents and staff in early childhood through on-going in-service which will help parents and staff to work more effectively

with children.

14. To extend services to HeadStart rather than duplicate existing services.

15. To make the necessary linkages with institutions of higher learning to help make available relevant college courses for parents and staff.

16. To make the community more responsive to the needs of children and their families.

Component Description

1. The project is operated in one church facility, one community facility and in eight schools.

	Students
Ann Street Bilingual	20
Arsenal School	60
Barnard-Brown School	20
Essex Street	20
Frank O. Jones	40
Kinsella School	40
Old Clark Street School	60
Vine Street School	40
Warburton Chapel	60
Wish School	60

2. The program operates from September through June on the 180 day Board of Education calendar. Each teacher teaches single five hour sessions and has one hour at the end of the day for team planning, in-service staff meetings, parent conferences and home visits.

Because there had been an increase in the number of Spanish speaking children enrolled in the program, Spanish speaking teachers were employed at the

Ann Street Bilingual School, Barnard-Brown School, Kinsella School, and Wish School. In addition, the program also employed a Spanish speaking social worker assistant who worked with centers in the most heavily impacted Spanish speaking schools and with the Arsenal School HeadStart classes as well.

To service the 460 younsters who were to have been originally involved in the program, a substantial staff was required. Staff requirements included:

1 Director
18 Teachers
3 Associate Teachers
1 Social Worker
1 Social Worker Assistant, Bilingual
21 Teacher Aides
1 Nurse
2 Secretaries

3. Children were selected as follows: 90% must meet OEO proverty guidelines; at least 10% of children enrolled must be handicapped; 10% may be over income but recommended by other agencies because they have special needs. Fees will be charged over income families based on Federal fee schedule.

4. The project was funded by OCD and by SADC. CRT is the grantee for the OCD funds with the program operation delegated to the Hartford Board of Education. The program was operated in accordance with OCD, HEW, and Board of Education guidelines. The program provided educational services, lunch, health service, social services and psychological services for the children and their families.

5. Parent involvement was mandated. Three structures had been set up to involve parents.

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a) HeadStart Center Committee - made up of center parents only.

b) HeadStart Policy Committee (delegate agency) at least 50% parents.

c) HeadStart Policy Council (grantee level) CRT at least 50% parents.

6. Supplementary training and career development for the staff is required with funds provided by OCD through a Training and Technical Assistance grant to the state and HeadStart Supplementary Training funds and by the COP program.

7. 25 hours per week were scheduled for a single session of five hours daily for children enrolled in the program.

Evaluation Plan

The evaluation of the Child Development HeadStart Program once again utilized the methodology which was in keeping with the testing restrictions which had formerly been imposed by OEO and continued under the Office of Child Development. Initially, several strategies were considered. The first was to use a pre and post administration of the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) as a basis for the measurement of student gains. This was to have been supplemented by an observational scale based upon video taping, and by individual and group measures of affective change. In addition, a parent questionnaire which had been constructed based upon the ideas and considerations which had evolved from meetings held by the coordinator and staff and which focused on the two areas of

pupil changes and degree of parent program involvement in the program was to have been administered. Other questionnaires were to have been distributed to staff, to receiving kindergarten teachers, and to other potential populations.

As could be expected, a number of the variations in the evaluation design resulted. First of all, logistical problems prohibited the post test administration of the PPVT and in consequence, other analyses were utilized. The Follow Through evaluation which was to have provided the observational scale and video taping was abandoned and finally the Child Development director reported that the staff questionnaire and the questionnaire which had been distributed to kindergarten teachers in conjunction with the previous year's evaluation had shown such salutary responses that a elicitation of similar data would provide no valuable program information. In consequence, only the parent questionnaire and this on a one-time basis was utilized.

Question

How do HeadStart children fare in terms of language development after 9 full months of the program?

Procedures and Findings

The following procedures and findings were reported by Dr. Wallace Roby, Consultant with the Connecticut State Department of Education, who assumed responsibility for this phase of the evaluation. Dr. Roby reported as follows:

The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test was administered to 300 Headstart children in October 1971. One and two-third years later, all Hartford kindergarten children were tested with the PPVT instrument as part of Hartford's kindergarten survey. From the original 300 Headstarters, 125 were identified in the Kindergarten survey. Hence, the test analyses that follow are for 125 children who were pretested in October 1971, received Headstart Program services in 1971-72, and were posttested in March 1973 part way through the kindergarten school year.

Table 1 indicates the Headstart Center teachers and the schools where Headstarters attended kindergarten for the 125 children having two sets of test scores.

Table 1

Headstart Center Teacher	Kindergarten Schools	Number of Children Followed Up
Womack, Warburton	Hooker	7
Cheney	Wish	10
Ross, Good Shepherd	Kinsella	8
Bullard	F.O. Jones	7
Darby	Wish	9
McCarthy	F.O. Jones	6
Barstow	Arsenal	6
Alzugaray	Arsenal	3
Falcone	Arsenal	4
Cuptill	Arsenal	6
Paddyfote	Arsenal	3
Roebuck	Arsenal	7
McDougald	Clark	9
C. Richards, Warburton	Hooker	4
Cordner, Warburton	Hooker	7
Richards, Bushnell	Vine	8
McFadden, Bushnell	Vine	10
Sodafsky (Perrin)	Clark	8
Smith, Essex St. Ctr.	Fox	3

Totals:

19 Center Teachers — 6 Hartford Elementary Schools — 125 Headstart background children

The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test measures receptive vocabulary. Receptive vocabulary is vocabulary a child understands, but not necessarily vocabulary he uses in speech. For very young children, the PPVT is often interpreted broadly as a measure of children's language development.

Table 2 indicates the PPVT results for the 125 Headstart background children as well as results for Hartford kindergarten children from Clark, Fisher, Jones, Twain, Vine, Waverly, and Wish schools combined.

Table 2

Children Compared	N	Prtst CA	Posttst CA	Pretest M	Pretest SD	Posttest M	Posttest SD	t
1971-73 Headstart Background Children	125	4-4	5-9	32.76	9.25	49.17	7.21	2.69*
1971-72 Hartford Kindergarten Children	717		5-8			47.29	6.91	

*Significant > .05

At the outset, Headstart children's language development lagged 13 months behind their chronological age. Twenty months later, the same children were found to be 10 months below the language development expected for their age. These results are interpreted as good progress in language development during the Headstart and kindergarten years.

Comparing Headstart background children with PPVT results typical for 7 Hartford inner city schools shows Headstarters making significantly better progress in language development than all kindergarteners in these schools."

Question

What were the reactions of parents to their youngsters HeadStart Child Development experiences ?

Procedures and Findings

As has been noted, a HeadStart Child Development Parents Survey was distributed to parents in the spring of the school year. Responses from 90 parents were tallied, converted to percentages, and reported as follows:

HEADSTART CHILD DEVELOPMENT SURVEY

Since your child has been in HeadStart Child Development, have you noticed that he or she:

	Almost Never	Sometimes	Usually
1. Wants to go to school?	5%	5%	90%
2. Seems to recognize and understand numbers?	7%	28%	65%
3. Gets along better with other children?	4%	15%	81%
4. Is beginning to understand many things?	4%	16%	80%
5. Seems to talk more clearly?	4%	11%	85%
6. Is able to call more things by name?	5%	14%	81%
7. Has become very curious about many things?	6%	15%	79%
8. Is proud of school accomplishments?	3%	7%	90%
9. Seems to enjoy school?	3%	5%	92%
10. Can do more things without your help?	7%	23%	70%

To what extent have <u>you</u> been involved with the Headstart-Child Development program this year?

	Almost Never	Sometimes	Frequently
11. Visiting my child's center?	11%	43%	46%
12. Working with the teachers?	29%	40%	31%
13. Serving on an advisory council?	63%	25%	12%
14. Helping during field trip?	63%	24%	13%

How well does HeadStart Child Development respond to student and parent needs by:

	Almost None	Some	Much
15. Providing your child with extra help when needed?	3%	25%	72%
16. Helping you to understand your child's school?	2%	23%	75%
17. Allowing to suggest program changes or improvements?	12%	32%	56%
18. Getting fathers involved in policy making?	42%	32%	26%
19. Trying to do what is best for children?	2%	10%	88%
20. Informing you of your child's growth and progress?	3%	11%	86%

As can be noted from the preceding table, a vast majority of the parents responded favorably in terms of the questions which had been posed to them regarding the effects of the program on their youngsters. Parent perceptions were generally strongly supportive of the program.

In some contrast, items which related to the parent's actual involvement in the HeadStart Program received a lesser degree of affirmation. While a majority of the parents indicated that they had visited a HeadStart Center to some extent (89%) or had worked with the teachers (71%), 63% of the parents reported that they had neither served on an advisory council nor had helped during a field trip. From the nature of these activities however, lower response patterns were not unexpected. Parenthetically, when these responses were analyzed in terms of language dominance, i.e. Anglo parents with Spanish surname parents, the results were virtually the same, thus supporting the contention that the Spanish surnamed parent had the opportunity and did in fact, participate in the program to the same extent as did his Anglo counterpart. This in itself tends to allay a criticism which had been leveled at other programs in the past with respect to the opportunity for Spanish surnamed parental involvements.

Summary and Conclusions

On the basis of the data which have been presented several findings can be reported:

1. An independent analysis of PPVP test results showed that while at the onset Hartford's HeadStart children may have lagged 13 months behind their chronological age in language

development, 20 months later these same children were found to be only 10 months below language development expectancy. These results were interpreted as being good progress in language development during both HeadStart and kindergarten years.

2. In similar fashion, when PPVT results were compared for youngsters with HeadStart backgrounds in seven Hartford inner-city schools, the HeadStart children were making significantly better progress in language development than the other youngsters.

3. Parents reported a high level of effects upon their youngsters as a result of the HeadStart Program.

4. In terms of parent involvement, it would appear that a large percentage of the parents had visited the centers and worked with the teachers while smaller numbers reporting service on an advisory council or in helping out during a field trip. Response patterns were comparable for Anglo and Spanish surnamed parents.

On the basis of the foregoing information it would appear that the Hartford HeadStart Child Development Program is substantially meeting the objectives contemplated in the proposal, and that the effects of these services are perceived favorably, not only by the parents of the youngsters involved but by actual test scores as well.